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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9669
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2351
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2631
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3318
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR IMMEDIATE 0721
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 3428
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2027

TAGS: [ASEAN MY](#)

SUBJECT: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S BILATERAL MEETING WITH
MALAYSIA FM DATO' SERI SYED HAMNID ALBAR

Classified By: Deputy Secretary Negroponte, reasons 1.4c, d

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Seri Syed Hanmid Albar said that Malaysia will most likely send peacekeeping troops to Darfur, during an August 1 meeting on the margins of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with Deputy Secretary Negroponte. GOM also is committed to change in

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Burma and has called for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.
END SUMMARY.

DARFUR

¶2. (C) FM Albar said he stressed to his Prime Minister the importance of participation in UN/AU hybrid peacekeeping forces in Darfur. Albar noted that the Prime Minister needs to review the report from the newly appointed Malaysian Special Envoy to Darfur's recent trip before committing troops. However, Albar stated that he expects a "positive" response.

¶3. (C) The Deputy Secretary said that the United States had insisted that the Darfur peacekeeping force have a unified chain of command that conformed to UN standards and practices. Albar echoed this sentiment. He understands that the Africans need to feel involved in conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Unfortunately, they do not have the logistical or financial capabilities to support the mission. The Deputy Secretary mentioned that he recently traveled to Darfur. He

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was told then by the African Union that they cannot handle it alone and troop sending countries such as Rwanda requested UN help. Albar noted that he went to Darfur two months ago. He said that if the peacekeeping mission falls under the African Union, "Malaysia cannot be involved," but if it is a UN effort, "Most probably we will take part."

BURMA

¶4. (C) When queried about the situation in Burma, Albar replied that "Myanmar is a very interesting place." Malaysia does not believe isolating Burma is a good approach. Albar sees a slow change towards opening up. Malaysia consulted

with the other three CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam), all of which are confident of change in Burma. The National Reconciliation Council was called on July 18th. Burma hopes to complete the constitution, send it to referendum and hold elections. Albar believes that people in uniforms will contest the elections but there will be elections, and that will be a good start.

15. (C) Albar observed that previously ASEAN was reluctant to talk about Burma, but now ASEAN is fairly open. ASEAN managed to convince Burma to include a human rights body in ASEAN's draft charter. Additionally, Albar had a discussion about developing a Human Rights office at the national level in Burma. Albar noted that he never imagined that ASEAN would be able to come up with a charter that all ASEAN, including Burma, could support.

16. (C) Another example of progress was UN Under Secretary General Gambiri's meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi. ASEAN was not granted access, because the Burmese government is worried that it accords her the status of a national leader. Malaysia has made it clear in a meeting with the Burmese Foreign Minister that they support the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.

BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

17. (C) Albar said "the bilateral relationship is better than before" particularly on the political front and Malaysia is "generally very happy". The Deputy Secretary remarked that Malaysia is the U.S.'s 10th-largest trading partner. Albar agreed that the trade relationship was excellent but "the only thing not much improved yet is your tourists." He said Malaysia has over 15 million tourists from Thailand, India, Europe and the Middle East. However, more American tourists go to Thailand. This year is "Visit Malaysia Year"

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and they had "hoped for more tourists". The Deputy Secretary asked if there were inhibiting factors such as air access affecting the numbers of American tourists. Albar said that American airlines do not have direct flights to Kuala Lumpur, only Singapore and Thailand. Malaysian airlines have two routes to the United States, Kuala Lumpur-Stockholm-New York and Kuala Lumpur-Taipei-Los Angeles. Albar said they "hope to get American airlines in Malaysia" and said "we have differences sometimes but not something to impede business."

EDUCATION

18. (U) Albar highlighted the 9,000 Malaysian students in the United States. Though there were some difficulties after 9/11, levels are now up to previous levels. The Malaysians are particularly proud of their partner program with Ohio, which was one of the first sponsored by Malaysia. The Malaysians have upgraded their partner institute and have shifted focus of study abroad from undergraduate to postgraduate degrees. Malaysian students still prefer attending PhD programs in the United States. Currently, Malaysia has campuses from Australian and British universities. Malaysian students spend two years at the local campus and study abroad for the third year. Malaysia hopes to create a similar program with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

19. (U) August 1, 2007; 16:10-16:40; Manila, Philippines

110. (U) Meeting Participants:

U.S.

Deputy Secretary John Negroponte
Kaye Lee, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary
Ted Wittenstein, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary

Colleen Kelly, EAP/RSP
Ellen Colleran, Embassy Notetaker

Malaysia

Foreign Minister Dato' seri Syed Hanmid Albar
Ambassdor Ahmad Rasidi
Mustapha Merican, Special Officer to the Foreign Minister
In Tan Dollah, Political Officer
Embassy Notetaker
KENNEY